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HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT

Wednesday, April 14, 1937

(~~FOR BROADCAST~~ USE ONLY)

Subject: "TIPS FOR FOOD SHOPPERS." Information from the Consumers' Market Service of the Consumers' Counsel of the Agricultural Adjustment Administration.

--ooOoo--

More news today for the lady who does the family marketing -- news from the Consumers' Market Service of the Consumers' Counsel.

First, news about that popular spring meat, lamb. As you probably know, "spring lambs" are milk-fed lambs from 3 to 5 months old, and they are usually on the market between April and the end of July. But this spring unfavorable weather has slowed up their growth. So the economists predict that spring lambs will be on the market later than usual and that the markets will have a smaller supply of lamb -- 10 percent less than a year ago. Also the report is that the quality of spring lamb this year is below average. As for the price, that probably will be higher than a year ago because supplies are smaller. And the price probably won't go down until late in June.

Now about trends in spring vegetable supplies and prices. If your family enjoys fresh asparagus for spring meals, as most families do, here's a pleasant prediction. The economists announce that asparagus shipments will probably reach their peak this month and that asparagus prices will probably go down as larger supplies come to market. They explain that the relatively high prices when the asparagus-season started in March were the result of unfavorable weather which slowed up the growth of asparagus and delayed shipment of the crop.

What is spring without salad? And what is salad without lettuce? Here's news about lettuce and tomatoes for the salad-eaters of April and May. The economists predict that the spring lettuce supply this year will be the second largest on record. Last year, you know -- last year was the largest on record. About a quarter of the lettuce supply on the market in spring comes from the spring-lettuce producing areas. April lettuce comes largely from Arizona and May lettuce from the Salinas district in California. Well, the predictions are that a great deal of lettuce will be shipped from these 2 States right along now, and then again during the latter part of May.

As for tomatoes, you perhaps know that tomato supplies usually become larger each month until they reach what the economists call the "peak movement" in June. During April, Florida is the State that ships the most tomatoes. The report has it that tomato acreage there this spring is the largest since 1931 -- except for last year's large acreage. As for tomato prices, they will probably be up somewhat in April and down in May and June.

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So much for fresh vegetables. Now about supplies and prices of canned vegetables. You remember perhaps that last spring the grocer's shelves were well filled with cans of corn, peas, snap beans, and potatoes -- or as the economists say it, these "canned stocks were relatively large a year ago." Well, this year stocks of canned corn, peas, and snap beans are considerably smaller than last year and stocks of canned tomatoes slightly smaller. But you should find plenty of canned asparagus and spinach on the market, for stocks of these 2 canned vegetables left over at the end of the marketing season this year will be fewer than last year, and prices will be higher. Then, because of the recent high prices, probably vegetable-growers will raise larger crops for canning this summer.

If you haven't had strawberry shortcake yet this year, listeners, don't give up hope. More and cheaper berries appear to be coming. It looks as if the best time to begin to work up your [illegible] shortcake appetite will be the last of this month. At least that is when the economists expect the "heaviest movement" of Louisiana strawberries. You know that Louisiana is the largest strawberry producing State. This spring earlier shipments of strawberries were small because of frost damage. But from now on you can expect to see more and more Louisiana berries on the market. From what I hear, supplies of strawberries from the early producing States are going to be the largest since 1933 -- 21 percent more than last year. Peak marketing of strawberries usually occurs in May. And probably prices will go down as supplies increase.

As for citrus fruits, prices of all citrus fruits are probably going up. Prices of summer oranges and lemons will probably be highest.

In spite of the recent large grapefruit crop, the supplies of grapefruit during the rest of this season will be about average and only slightly larger than last year. Grapefruit prices usually advance during the spring and summer but this year, because supplies are no larger than average and prices have been relatively low, probably summer-prices will increase more than usual.

As for oranges on the market this spring, probably the supply will be slightly smaller than average but by the summertime and early fall the supplies will be extremely small. Prices of oranges will probably go up as they usually do this spring and by summer and fall prices will be considerably higher. California Valencia or summer oranges are practically the only oranges available in summer and fall. And they will probably sell at relatively high prices at the start of the season.

As for your lemonade this summer, you are likely to find it a more expensive drink than usual. At least, lemon production this year appears to be the smallest since 1924. As the economists say it, "indicated lemon production is 2 million boxes below a year ago." The peak in lemon prices usually comes in July or August.

That concludes the news from the Consumers' Market Service on trends in prices and supplies of seasonal foods.

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